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LOVING WORDS,

IN

TWO SERMONS TO CHILDREN.

BY THE

REV. ADOLPH MONOD,

OF PARIS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

FOR

THE PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

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PREFACE.

The following two discourses to children, by the Rev. Adolph Monod, were delivered on successive anniversaries of the Sabbath-school of the Reformed Church at Paris. They were to have been followed by a third on a similar occasion, but the pious purpose of the preacher was not fulfilled by reason of his lamented death. A few passages of the original, which are wholly local in their application, have been passed over in the translation. They refer to a condition of things in both the church and state in a foreign land which have no intelligible meaning in our own. These omissions detract nothing from the beauty and completeness of the discourses, which will be found rich in evangelical truth, expressed with great simplicity, and well adapted to the class that the preacher addressed.

Let the dear children who read these sermons receive them as the last exhortation of a Christian friend whose love for them was peculiarly tender, and whose sole desire in delivering them, was to lead them "in the days of their youth" to the cross of his Saviour and theirs.

LOVING WORDS.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing?

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. LUKE ii. 40–52.

MY dear young friends, I am quite sure you love to travel, and am about to propose to you a long and pleasant journey; but before we enter upon it, you must fancy yourselves in Judea, at the time of which St. Luke speaks, more than eighteen hundred years ago.

It is spring time, toward the end of March; which corresponds to the middle of the month Nisan, so called by the Jews, and as Judea is eighteen degrees, or four hundred and fifty leagues, nearer the equator than we are,—your school teacher will explain this,—the season is more advanced than with us.

It is the pleasantest time of the year, in one of the most beautiful countries in the world; now that the Turks have possession, it is quite changed, but I speak of the Judea of former times. Just at this season the weather is delightful, neither too cold nor too hot. The heat, however, is somewhat oppressive on the plains of Jericho, and on the coast of the frightful Dead Sea; near which nothing

shows any sign of life. E sewhere, it is agreeably temperate; in the interior, on account of the elevation of the soil, the country is like a broad mountain, and on the borders of the sea a breeze is blowing at morning and evening, to which Moses makes reference in Genesis, where he speaks of "the cool of the day."

Rains, storms, and inundations are over; the Jordan, after having for some weeks poured upon its banks a flood of water, mingled with a fertile soil, is about returning to its accustomed limits, to the great joy of the cultivator, who began to fear that his land would be carried away with it, and who waited also to be rid of the visits of the lion, chased from his lair by the swelling of the river. Some

weeks have passed since the trees put out their leaves, and the almond its blossom, which Solomon compares to the white hair of an old man. The apricot, peach, and plum are almost ripe, and we already hear the scythe of the reaper, whom passers-by salute in these words: "The Lord be with you!" and who answers: "The Lord bless you!"

The feast of the Passover, which is the most solemn of all the feasts, takes place in the beginning of the harvest; —for it was the time of the year in which the earth most rejoices, when God delivered his people from the "Land of Egypt and the house of bondage."

You see here and there throughout the country, groups of travellers who,

from all parts of Judea, are going up to Jerusalem, "as doves to their windows." These are the families of Israel, assembled in great companies, or caravans, about "to present themselves before the Lord their God in the place which he has chosen."

The men go up twice a year, in May, for the feast of Pentecost, and in September, for the feast of Tabernacles; but the women, who are not required to go up but once, generally wait for the feast of the Passover.

During the day, the caravan travels over a delightful region of country, like a continuous garden; and if there are a few barren spots, they pass over them without complaining. At night they stop, and, if time permits, rapidly pitch their tents under the bright

stars. On the way, they chant some of the beautiful "songs of degrees," so called, because they sing them while going up to Jerusalem, (which, being built on high ground, commands a view of the surrounding country,) as, for example, the Psalm cxxv., commencing thus: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which can not be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever;" or the Psalm cxxvi., which closes thus: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

But while they travel and sing, who will take care of their houses and lands, and guard them from the enemy or robbers? God has provided for that, for he forgets nothing that concerns his people. He has said by Moses: "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God twice in the year." They can therefore go without fear: God takes care of their property, and what God takes care of, is well guarded.

But what are these pilgrims going to do, when they arrive at Jerusalem? I will tell you briefly; for to enter into all the details, would make the narration too long. Every family is provided with a lodging in Jerusalem, during the celebration of the feast, and

the population of the city, which in ordinary times numbers 120,000, is twenty times as large during this celebration. The feast lasts seven days, of which the most solemn are the first and last, or "days of holy convocation," devoted to public worship, or the Sabbath of entire rest.

The intermediate time is taken up in the ordinary work, and the ceremonies of the feast. When the opening of this is announced by the sound of the trumpet, from the top of the mountain on which the temple stands, the father of each family brings a lamb, or a kid of a year old, and without blemish, kills it in the court of the sacrifices; and after they have poured the blood on the altar of burnt-offering, he takes home the flesh to roast.

The evening being come, this lamb is served up with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, on a table, around which the family gather, standing, each with his shoes on his feet, his dress girdled, and his stick in his hand, as if ready to set out on a journey. The father of the family blesses the food placed before them, above all the lamb of the Passover, of which he partakes with all who are assembled. All of it must be eaten, or if any remain, it is burned. At the beginning and end of the repast, he blesses likewise a cup of wine, which is passed around two or three times, while they sing the great Hallel, or hymn of praise, for such is the name given to the Psalms cxiii. and those following to the cxviii. Doubtless they

sing with deep feeling; "This is the day the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." I ought not to forget to tell you, that the youngest child in the family asks at the beginning of the repast, "What is the meaning of these services?" To which his father replies, by narrating, as he has himself heard narrated, the history of that memorable night, when Israel went out of the land of Egypt, and the feast of the Passover was celebrated for the first time. These bitter herbs recall the days of bitterness spent in Egypt; the unleavened bread, eaten while standing, is in memory of the hasty flight, which did not admit of their waiting till their bread was leavened, or of their sitting down to eat it. The

lamb called to mind the blood with which the door-posts were marked when the destroying angel was turned away.

Upon the evening of the second day, they went into the fields in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, to pluck a handful of corn, and so sanctify the fruits of the earth. The other days are celebrated by various sacrifices. Perhaps, my dear children, you would not like to have witnessed the death of the innocent lambs, but this was necessary, to foreshadow to the minds of the people the sacrifice of the innocent victim, who was to die for the sins of the whole world.

Oh, how interesting must have been these ceremonies, these family repasts, this chanting of psalms, this mag-

nificent temple, with its vast courts, and superb columns! You would, doubtless, like to have been there, and I also. But do you know what I would have liked far better?

I had far rather have been a fellow traveller with the pilgrims in a caravan you see going up from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Do you ask, Was it richer or more honourable than the others? On the contrary, it is the least so. No one coming from Nazareth was much thought of, and with the Jews the word Nazarene was a term of reproach. What is it, then, that attracts me to this caravan? Ah! because there is found in it a child twelve years old, whom I should eagerly desire to know, and not I alone, for "many prophets and kings

have desired to see him, and have not seen him, and to hear him, and have not heard him." The angels, too, looking down from heaven, follow his footsteps, asking, "What will this child become," whom a chain of prophets, from the commencement of the world, represent as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," by the sacrifice of himself; the glorious Conqueror who is "to destroy the works of the devil;" the powerful King, who is to gather the nations for his inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the world for his possession. A child of twelve, who is to become the Saviour of the world. What a spectacle, my dear children, is this!

And when, having arrived at this

age, at which time a young Hebrew received the name of the son of the covenant, and commenced to participate in the solemn feasts, he goes up to Jerusalem for the first time, what an honour for the caravan in which he goes! All this is true. But perhaps those who enjoy this privilege do not know how great it is. Even his mother, and Joseph, whom he respectfully called his father, though he was the Son of God, understood it but imperfectly. As a child, Jesus was not distinguished from other children, but by his holy obedience. He did not teach, nor perform miracles, for the time was not yet come. The Gospels which tell us so much about the last three years of his life, scarcely say anything of his childhood or of

the time preceding his baptism. In St. Luke, for example, there are twenty-three chapters for three years, and one chapter for thirty years. Perhaps you are curious to know more, but God has written his word for our instruction, not for our amusement. And if St. Luke tells us but little of the child Jesus, what he does say is full of instruction. As Jesus the man should be the example for men, so Jesus the child should be the child's model. Perhaps many of you are as old as he was at the time of which we are writing. Learn, then, of him, what a child of your age should be. Oh, my dear children, the more you strive to copy his example, the happier you will be! And why should you not strive? The first step in this

endeavour is to know him; and this, with the help of God, we will endeavour to do.

Jesus observes the law of Moses, and the form of worship which it enjoins. From the time of his birth, and before the child had the knowledge to cry, "My father" and "My mother," he had been taken to the temple, and all that the law of God had commanded had been performed for him. But this was done by his father and mother, as was the case with you, my dear children, when you were baptized. Now, however, that he has come to years of discretion, he is anxious to take part in the feasts of Jerusalem, and to profit by them; for it is easy to see that it is not only obedience, but the desire of his own

heart, which takes him to Jerusalem with his parents. You will say, perhaps, Was there any need that a child so full of the grace of God, and so well instructed in his word, should go up with others to worship and to listen? Jesus did not reason thus at twelve years of age or at thirty. You remember, perhaps, that when John the Baptist refused to baptize him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus answered: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh me to fulfil all righteousness." You may remember, too, how that, after he had been declared the Son of God, it was his custom to worship in the synagogue upon each Sabbath, and to attend every feast in the temple. Thus,

from his infancy, Jesus showed himself "an Israelite indeed," who submitted himself to the law of Moses, though *he* was the Son of God, and Moses is called only the "servant of God." But for Jesus, the word of Moses was the word of God, and to disobey Moses was to disobey God. This accounts for his holy zeal in presenting himself at the Passover—increased, we may be sure, by the thought that he was accompanied by his father and mother, brothers and sisters.

The New Testament does not contain rules for Christian worship like those which are found in the law of Moses, to regulate the time, place, and order.

This is a great pity, perhaps you

will say, since we could serve God better, if he had continued to decide everything for us. But this is not the spirit of the gospel. In ancient times, God taught his people as a little child is taught; and led them as a little child is led. Now, the church is, as it were, a full grown man, to whom the way is only to be pointed out, that he may follow it. Shall the man then wish that he were in leading strings, because it is easier to be led? No, the Christian cannot regret that he has no longer, like the Jew, a law of religious observances, if he understand the privilege and glory of the direct teaching of God's Holy Spirit. We have, instead, a Christian church founded on the word of God; we have Sabbath services, and

Sabbath-schools, and above all, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. In order to partake of this feast, we are not called upon, like the Jews of old, to take a long and fatiguing journey, but each one may enjoy the privilege, wherever in God's providence he may be placed. You are not too young, to ask, as did the Jewish children, the meaning of this feast, what event does it recall? why is the table spread? who are they who partake of it, and why am I not among them? While we do not go up to a great temple, three times a year, we have a feast for our souls in the weekly returning Sabbath. Do you prize this day of all days, my young friends, and thank God for it? Do you know, too, that God's blessing will rest upon

you, if you delight in it, and sanctify it in your hearts, and that you will be delivered from many temptations and snares which might otherwise befall you? When Satan wishes to tempt a little boy and make him a wicked man, he often commences by attacking him on the Sabbath. "Ah poor child;" he says, "is this your day of rest? You are taking a great deal of trouble to be good. Couldn't you amuse yourself better than by listening to sermons? How many there are, as good as you, who never go to Sabbath-school!" So speaks the tempter, but what does God say? "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you."

"The fear of the Lord is the begin-

ning of wisdom," &c.—Jesus went not only in the body, but in the spirit to the feast; he lifted not only his hands, but his heart, to God. This you might have known, had it not been spoken of by St. Luke, but you would not have known, that he remained three days after the Passover, and was found by his parents in the temple, with the doctors, or learned men, who were astonished at his answers. Certainly if Jesus had not had a special mission as the Son of God, he would not have caused his parents, particularly his mother, three days of anxiety by remaining at Jerusalem, without telling them of his intention.

But I will not now occupy myself in talking of his mission, and only say

a word respecting the lesson we are to learn from this particular event.

How many children are glad of any excuse to stay away from their school and their teachers. Jesus, on the contrary, makes for himself a school, and summons his masters, that he may learn of them in private as well as in public. For, take notice, Jesus remains in the temple to learn, not to teach; he listens, asks questions, and replies with modesty, to those who ask questions of him.

In his divine character, he was able even then to teach with authority, for it was written of him in the Psalms, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I

keep thy precepts." But he had rather say with the young Elihu, "Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom." The time would come, when he should speak with authority, and not as the Scribes, but he is now a child, and though wiser than his teachers, does not think of displaying his wisdom. It is said of some children, that they are wise beyond their years. So much the better, if they are more thoughtful, docile, and quiet, than children generally are; but if by that is meant, that they have an assurance of manner, and authority, which is not natural, or pleasing, so much the worse. It is not good, for either mind or body, that they should, in this sense, be men before their time,—and I had

rather see them at their age as was Jesus at his.

You say, perhaps, What had these doctors to teach Jesus, when they were so ignorant of the law of God, that, twenty years later, they joined themselves to the Pharisees, to demand the death of Him whose answers and wisdom they had so much admired? This is very true, but Jesus listens, and learns, notwithstanding; though he says, in after life, "They say, and do not." Most of them did not set a good example, though there were among them good men who were able to teach, having had the law of Moses in their possession for many generations. You know, for example, when Herod asked the wise men "where Christ should be born," they

answered, at once, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophets; and thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel." They could tell Jesus much that was instructive and useful in the prophecies, for the prophets had written of him. There is no doubt that his mind is ever furnished from the word of God, and I think I can see him sitting beside his mother, reading the prophecies which relate to his own sufferings, and asking, perhaps, the meaning of the twenty-third Psalm, or fifty-first chapter of Isaiah, which, by degrees, is revealed to him. It is in this way that he has acquired the wisdom which

the doctors admire so much, without knowing the reason of it; and in this way, too, he is becoming strong enough to resist the temptations of the devil in the wilderness, with no other shield than the word of God, which is so powerful a defence, that his enemy leaves him after three attempts to make him fall.

Like the Lord Jesus Christ, my dear children, strive while you are young, to realize the value of God's word of truth. Avail yourselves of every occasion to hear it, ask your parents and teachers to explain it; but above all, read and search the Scriptures. In them you will find a light to guide you in darkness, and strength to help you in temptation. You know that, in these days, almost

every one knows how to read. The coachman on his box, the merchant behind the counter, even little children are sometimes seen with newspapers, and if they are good, it is not wrong to read them. But, my dear children, there is no news so important as that which the Bible brings us. In it we find "the one thing needful," which our Lord exhorts us to choose, like Mary, and to which St. Paul exhorts Timothy to apply himself.

Listen to the blessed promise made to those who read it attentively, and whose delight is in the law of the Lord: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. * * * Then

shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble." Would you succeed in all that you undertake? meditate first upon God's word: yet it will not be of use to you if you read hastily, shut your book, and say, I have read my chapter. You must think of what you read, and ask God to help you to understand it. Open your New Testament, for instance, in this spirit, and read the verse found in Romans xii. 10: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love," &c. Say to yourself: The Bible tells me I ought to be kind, affectionate, and unselfish; but how often am I disobedient to my parents and teachers, and perhaps jealous of my young friends! O God, make me humble, respectful,

affectionate, and ready to give up to others! You continue: "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Am I active, industrious, prayerful, and faithful? Again ask God to "search you and try you, and see if there be any wicked way in you, and to lead you in the way everlasting." A verse read in this manner will do you more good than a chapter without prayer or thought. I know it is not easy even for grown people so to read, but by the help of the Holy Spirit, you will better understand God's word, and by reading in the spirit of the child Jesus, you may be filled with the knowledge of God while you are yet young. In thus studying the Scriptures, Jesus Christ was preparing himself for the

work which the Father had given him to do—"to seek and to save that which was lost;" that work which he spoke of as "finished" at the crucifixion; and in the earlier part of his ministry, when he said: "My meat and drink are to do the will of him that sent me." That he was preparing himself for this, even when a child, we can see by his reply to his mother: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Jesus knew that he was not sent into the world for his own amusement or advantage, but for the glory of God, and the good of man; and feeling that for so great a work he had none too much time, he served God as faithfully when a child as in his manhood. Thus, at this time, he taught by his

example what he taught later in word; "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me," &c.

And now, my dear young friends, do you ever ask yourselves why God has placed *you* in the world? Young as you are, you no doubt often think of the future, and of the manner in which you will spend your life, if it please God to prolong it. You say, perhaps, What shall I do to distinguish myself, or to be rich; or what profession shall I choose? I hope you do not go farther, and ask, What shall I eat and what shall I drink, or how shall I amuse myself? But these questions are not all wrong; some of them are right, in their place. God has not made anything in vain.

When he placed you in the world, he had a work for you to do, and for you alone. This work, I need not tell you, is not like the work of our Lord. What man, what angel, what creature would dare to pretend to assist in the work of redemption? "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." Nor is your work as great as that to which St. Paul was appointed: to travel over the whole world, establishing churches, an instrument of converting millions of souls to the gospel of Christ. To but one man among millions is given such a work. To Jesus, the work of Jesus; to Paul, the work of Paul; and to you, your work, which God has expressly appointed for you, and you for it. It may be some great enter-

prise: to carry the gospel to the heathen, like the missionary Casalis: to found a charitable institution, like Francké; or to reform a parish and civilize a country like Oberlin. This may astonish you, but who knew of St. Paul, in his childhood, what manner of child he should be?

Many of you, however, may be called to an humble and obscure position; but humble or glorious, obscure or distinguished, it matters little in the sight of God: "the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord God looketh on the heart." What makes a man great in the sight of God is not that he has a great work to do, but that he is faithful in the work to which he is appointed. Serve

God with fidelity, and you will have the happiness of knowing that you are co-workers with God, who will reveal to you, day after day, the way in which you should walk. If you do not choose to serve him, God, who has no need of his creatures, will find others to do his work; but you will lose not only your labour, but your reward. While others are busied about their own affairs, is there not one among you, my dear children, who desires, like Jesus Christ, to consecrate himself to the work of God? Oh say, with him, "I would be about my father's business." Give me wisdom, O God, to know what I am to do, and faithfulness to accomplish my work! I am young; life is before me; I would glorify thy name,

and do good to my fellow-men: Lead me, and I will follow thee! Are there any among the girls or boys whom I address, who have given their hearts to God? Oh, I trust there are, and that they are ready to answer: As for me, I will not pass my time, like the useless butterfly, in my own amusement, but rather like the bee, in making precious honey. I would spend my life in such a way, that when I come to die, I may not feel that I have lived in vain.

Yes, dear children, I beseech you, seek salvation through our Lord and Saviour, and then follow his example. Do not think you must wait until you are grown up, before you enter upon the service of God. Begin now, and you will find how much a child can

do. Happy the children of whom it may be said, They love their Bible, they love their school, they are obedient to their parents and teachers, in short, they follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who pleased not himself, and who did with his might whatsoever his hands found to do. Oh, happy the family and school where such a child is found! Jesus was but a little child when it was remarked of him, that he was different from other children, and one of our verses explains it, by telling us that he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. God approved, blessed, guided, and loved him;—such was this holy child, and such should you be. Loving God and loved by him, you will surely be

happy, whatever may befall you. A minister was one day called to see a little child who was very ill, too ill, it was thought, to recover. He was sitting up in bed, leaning against a pillow, while he read a book of hymns, which he held in his hand. His pale and thin cheeks showed a great deal of suffering, but he did not look unhappy. After a few minutes, the clergyman said to him,

"Do you think you will ever get well?"

"No, sir," he replied, "the doctor said that I might live a few weeks, but he should not be surprised if I should die at any moment."

"Are you willing to die?"

"Oh yes, sir, sometimes I feel sorry when I think of leaving my father

and mother; but I know that in heaven I shall be with my Saviour, and I hope they will meet me there. I am almost afraid I am too anxious to go."

"What makes you think that you are ready to die?"

He hesitated a moment, then said,

"Because Jesus Christ says, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' I know that I have come to him, and love him, and I want to be with him!"

While the clergyman talked with him, they heard shouts of laughter from some little children who were playing in the street.

"Oh! how much happier I am now," said the sick child, "than when I was well and able to play with those

little boys; for then I did not love God, and now there is not a child in the street who is as happy!"

Another little boy who died at the age of six, lived long enough to show that, by coming yourself to the Saviour, you may bring others as well. While his parents were weeping beside him, a poor workman came to the house, and asked permission to see him. At first he was refused, but upon urging his request, he was admitted. As soon as he saw the body, he burst into tears, and, to the surprise of the parents, said:

"You wonder why I weep; I will tell you. God made use of your little boy to soften my hard heart. One day, when I was coming down a long ladder leading from the roof of a

house upon which I had been working, I found your little boy at the foot. 'Were you not afraid when you were up so high?' he asked, and then added: 'Oh, I know why you were not afraid; you prayed God to take care of you this morning!' I had not done so then, but I have ever since."

May we not believe of these children that they were "filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon them?"

There are but two verses written about our Saviour, from the time of his visit to the temple to his baptism; that is, from the age of twelve till he was thirty; but there is much to learn from these two verses. St. Luke tells us that "He increased in wisdom and

stature, and in favour with God and man." The promise of his childhood was fulfilled in his youth and manhood; and thus was realized the beautiful verse in Proverbs iv. 10: "The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." From this you learn that we cannot stand still in our course, but must either become better or worse. If you do not advance, you lose ground.

But what I would have you notice particularly is, that Jesus was "subject to his parents." He went into the temple and talked with the doctors, to fulfil his mission from God, which he could not slight, but he nevertheless was "subject to them." He had more wisdom and grace

than any man: He was the Son of God, and his parents were sinful creatures who had need of his salvation; but he was "subject to them."

What the child is at home, he will be at school, and later on, in society. Obedient to his parents, he will be obedient to all the authorities established by God. Disobedient and disrespectful at home, he will resist his teachers, and disregard the laws of his country. I would have you all, my friends, whether young or old, apply to your consciences the words of St. Luke, "he was subject," &c.,—by the humble and the great, by children and parents, scholars and teachers, ministers of the gospel, and ministers of justice, oh that all were subject to God!

We all have him for our example, and the promise of his grace to enable us to follow it. Come to him, then, as poor sinners, not able of yourselves to think a good thought, for that pardon and help which are yours by the purchase of his blood, if you believe. Come, and you will find that the secret of living like Jesus is to live with him by faith and prayer.

LOVING WORDS.

SERMON II.

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." Prov. xx. 11.

THERE is a story in the Bible about a man named Hazael, who was an officer in the court of Benhadad, king of Syria. Elisha, a prophet of the Lord, came to Damascus, a great city in the kingdom, at a time when the king was very sick. Benhadad, hav-

ing heard of the wonderful cure of Naaman the leper, performed by the prophet, sent Hazael to ask Elisha to come to him. When Hazael presented the request of the king his master, Elisha looked at him for some time without speaking, and then burst into tears. "Why weepeth my lord?" said Hazael, and Elisha answered: "Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword." And Hazael answered: "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Then Elisha said: "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." The next day, Hazael killed the king, sat upon the throne, and

did all the wicked things which the prophet had foretold. If I could tell you, as Elisha told Hazael, all that is going to befall you, and if I could say to you, God hath showed me that you shall be rich and honoured, or that you shall be poor and obscure; you will live to old age, or die young; enjoy good health, or suffer from sickness; you are to remain in your own country or go abroad,—if I could tell you all these things, my young friends, would you not listen eagerly? But to be able to do this, I must be a prophet, which I am not; or to pretend to know it, I must be a fortune-teller, which I would not be on any account, knowing that such are an abomination to God. Besides, if I knew all that was to befall you, I would not

tell you, unless commanded by God, as he commanded Elisha; for to do so, would be to expose you to great temptation and sorrow; and we have reason to thank God that he has concealed this knowledge from us. There is, however, one thing about the future which I can tell you, although it may not interest you as much as many things which I cannot tell; but this one truth is the only one of any importance for you to know. I can tell whether you are going to serve God and keep his commandments, walking therein without turning to the right or to the left, and whether you will be accepted by Him who looks not upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart. To know this, I need not be a prophet. I have only

to see what you are at the present time, for it is written in my text, "even a child is known by his doings."

How is it, then, that we can tell so much about your future character, when we cannot pretend to know what will be your future history? Herein is the difference: your present actions depend entirely upon yourself, and show what is the state of your heart, as the fruit shows whether the tree be good or bad; but your history depends upon many things over which you have no control. A gardener, by looking at a seed, can tell what kind of fruit it will produce, if God give it life; but he cannot tell whether the soil will be favourable, the sun warm, the rains

plentiful, or whether, indeed, the plant may not be pulled up before it bear fruit at all. Well, dear children, I am the gardener, and your present actions are the seeds at which I look to show me the state of your heart; and knowing what is there, I can tell you of your future conduct: good, if the heart is good; bad, if it is bad. Of your future history I know nothing, for God "maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, upon the just and the unjust." Your character is written upon your hearts; your history is not there.

God has placed us in the world to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who went about doing good; but besides this general work, there is a particular mission for each one

of us. Look at that group of men in a harvest field; they are all working in the same field, but they are not all doing the same thing. One cuts the grain with his scythe, another binds it in bundles, a third ties them up, and a fourth gathers them into the barn. We, likewise, are all called upon to serve God, though not in the same way: God having given to each one his place and his task, your work is not mine, nor is mine yours; and as our place is provided for us, our faculties, our history, and even the duration of our life, are ordered with reference to it. God having pointed out the way, exhorts us to walk in it, but he does not force us; and while some "delight to run in the way of his commandments," many, alas, turn

aside. It is for this reason, dear children, I inquire so anxiously whether your work now "be pure, and whether it be right." The mission of our Lord Jesus Christ was, to glorify God on the earth, and die on the cross for the salvation of sinners. This work he so perfectly accomplished that nothing was wanting, and the law of God was not more minutely written than faithfully accomplished in the life and death of our Saviour. Thus, when in dying, he said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," both God and man confirm the testimony he rendered to himself, and which none other so fully deserved. Yes, dear children, it is only by reason of the finished work of our Lord, that

we dare to stand before God with peace in our hearts, and his name upon our lips. Thanks to the grace of God, there are some who, though at a great distance from our perfect Example, have faithfully accomplished the work appointed them, and they, too, as their lives end, could say with joy, "I have finished my work."

Such was the life of a good man, in whose history you will find so much instruction that I hope you will listen to it with attention.

In a valley formed by a group of mountains detached from the Vosges, and called *Le Ban de la Roche*, there lived, nearly a hundred years ago, a people quite cut off from the rest of the world, and almost uncivilized, though they were within a dozen

miles of Strasburg. The houses in which these poor people lived, were miserable cabins, built among the rocks. They cared nothing about the instruction of their children, few of whom could read, and a school-master was not as well supported as the shepherd who took care of the few flocks found among them. The land was scarcely more cultivated than the inhabitants; for on the side of the mountain it was so steep that it seemed almost impossible to till it, and in the plain, the streams were so abundant that there were few spots dry enough for culture. Besides, the soil was rocky, and the climate so cold, that neither the vine nor grain could flourish, and the potatoe, which had been introduced in the year 1709,

when there was a great famine, had become so poor that it was hardly worth planting. Then, too, there were no good roads communicating with Strasburg or the neighbouring villages, and as they had no opportunities for getting new ideas, they lived in great ignorance. I need not tell you that the Bible was scarcely known among them, for the only thing necessary to keep people in ignorance, is to withhold the Bible, which is full of instruction on all points relating to this world, as well as the world to come.

To this country where darkness and ignorance reigned, and where the people were scarcely more enlightened than a tribe of Hottentots, came a young pastor named Oberlin, who, in

the year 1767, accepted this humble position, which no one else would take. The three traits necessary to make one useful in the world, are a pious heart, a clear head, and a persevering will,—and these Oberlin possessed to a remarkable degree. He set to work at once, determining to accomplish two things: the enlightening of the people, and the civilization of the country. On the Sabbath, he preached the gospel, announcing the love of God the Father, who sent his Son to die for a world lost in sin; and by making them friends to the Lord Jesus, he so attached them to himself, that he was generally known among them as a father. During the week, he went at the head of his flock, with his pick-axe on his shoulder, to

assist in digging trenches to carry off the water which overflowed the plains, to raise embankments on the hill-side, that the land might be cultivated to greater advantage, and to open roads from one village to another. This was not all: he imported better seeds and fruits, founded a savings-fund, encouraged industry, and sent, at his own expense, intelligent young men to Strasburg, to learn trades. He introduced spinning, and induced the Le Grand family, of Basle, to come and live in the province, where they established a silk manufactory, and proved to be great benefactors to the people.

Oberlin died at the age of eighty-six, in the midst of this great family, of which he was the head, leaving a

Christian people where he had found heathen, and a prosperous country where he had found a wilderness. Do not think that this work was easily accomplished. Oberlin experienced the truth of Christ's saying: "The servant is not greater than his lord; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." But he determined to overcome evil by good, and at last succeeded. One day he was informed that some of the people who were opposed to his work had resolved to lay wait for him, and punish him. A certain Sunday was appointed, and on the morning of that day Oberlin preached from the text, "Resist not evil," &c. After service, those who had conspired against him retired to the house of one of the party, where

the plan was arranged, when suddenly the door opened, and Oberlin entered.

"My friends," said he, "here I am; as you wished to attack me, I have come to deliver myself up, that you may not be guilty of the baseness of lying in wait for me."

What do you think these wicked people did? They humbly asked his pardon, and from that day aided him in all his benevolent plans.

Perhaps you say, I could not do the work of Oberlin without his talents or position; but if you labour faithfully, and in his spirit, you may accomplish great things; as in the case of a poor servant of the good pastor, who followed in his footsteps, and helped him in his missionary work among his people. Louise

Scheppler, at the age of fifteen, was so impressed with the piety of Oberlin, that she begged to enter his service. He received her into his family, and from that time she never left him, but served him for fifty years, without accepting any recompense; wishing to be considered as a friend, without, however, ceasing to be an obedient servant. She worked so faithfully with him, that it is impossible to relate the history of Oberlin without saying something about Louise. She not only helped him in his parish by her counsels and her efforts, but sometimes her suggestions were of great use to her pastor. Thus, seeing that the peasant women could not work in the fields and attend to their little ones, she assembled the

children in a large room, where, at the head of some other guardians, she amused and instructed them during the absence of their parents. Such institutions are now known as orphan asylums, and for them we are indebted to Oberlin, through Louise Scheppler.

We cannot better tell you of her worth, than by citing the testimony of Oberlin, found in his will: "My dear children," he says, "I leave to your care and protection my faithful friend, the indefatigable Louise, who has brought you up, and been to you almost a mother. A true servant of Christ, her zeal extended still further. She went into the villages, assembled the children about her, instructed them in the will of God, taught them to sing, prayed with them, and com-

municated to them all the instructions she had received from her excellent mother. The innumerable difficulties she encountered would have discouraged others. The rude character of the children, their language, which she hardly understood, bad roads, rocks, rivers, overflowing streams, storms, snow and ice,—nothing discouraged her. She gave herself up to the service of God. I leave her in your care; you will show, by your attentions to her, whether you respect the last wishes of your father." The children of Oberlin wished Louise to share in their little portion, but she absolutely refused, and requested only to be permitted to add his name to hers; and she was, therefore, known as Louise Scheppler Oberlin.

And now do you again ask, What is my work, and will I ever perform it as faithfully as these two servants of the Lord? You are answered by the text, which tells you to look at your actions at the present time. The acorn will become an oak if it has in it the germ of an oak; and you will accomplish the duty of to-morrow, of next year, of your whole life, if you are faithful in the performance of the duty of to-day. When we look at a little child, we are too apt to ask, "What will he become by and by?" Whereas we ought to inquire, "What is he now?" The friends of Zacharias asked, concerning the infant John, "What manner of child will this be?" but his father was well satisfied, because he had heard the

angel say, before his birth, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost; and many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God: and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Oh look well to your conduct in childhood!

I know that you may change later in life, but I am only sure about those who are already walking in the ways of the Lord, and trusting in his grace to keep them from temptation. There is a possibility of change, as I said before. When? Some time hence. But are we sure their lives will be spared? and, alas, that which pre-

vents their serving God at present, may it not still prevent? As is the seed, so is the tree; as is the child, so is the man. A young oak, small though it may be, is still a tree; and a child is in the same sense a man; so is the work of a child a man's work, undertaken in the beginning. To "love God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself," is as much your duty now as it will ever be. And whom should you love, dear children, if not God? who is the only holy, the only wise, the only good Being, and to whom David addresses the beautiful Psalm commencing: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who for-

giveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

Do you say you do not love God because you cannot see him? You do see him in his works, in all the good things he gives you, in the sun which shines upon you, in the air you breathe, in the blessings of your home and friends. And will you not listen to him when he says, "My son, give me thine heart?" The first and great commandment is, to "love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is never too soon, believe me, to put

these two commands into practice. Everywhere, and at all times, you may find occasion to serve God, and be useful to your neighbour. Do you ask how? I answer, in a thousand ways. You can make your parents happy by your obedience; you can be obliging to your brothers and sisters, and set a good example to your school-fellows and playmates. If you see any of your young friends doing wrong, you can strive to dissuade them from it, and counsel them to give their hearts to God. Sometimes you may meet with difficulties, and be treated unkindly; your good intentions may be mistrusted, and those whom you wish to serve may return evil for good: but you are placed here to glorify God, and he

will give you courage to stand up for his cause, and you will have his favour, without which, nothing that you could otherwise gain in this world would be worth having.

To make the subject clear to you, suppose we follow a Christian child for a whole day. We will say he is a school-boy, and call him James. James rises early in the morning, and having finished dressing, opens his Bible, reads a chapter, or some verses, after which he falls upon his knees and prays. He may not make a long prayer, but he speaks to God with his whole heart, and God hears him.

When I say he speaks to God, I am reminded of the story of a little boy who was obliged to repeat daily

a prayer which he had learned; but after he began to love his Saviour, he felt the need of saying what was in his heart.

"Mamma," said he, one day, after repeating the form of words she had taught him, "I have *said my prayers*, now I want *to pray*."

To go back to our picture of a Christian child: he, too, does not say his prayers, but offers up the desires of his heart; and when we are so in earnest, God listens to us, and grants us all that we truly need. James prays that his sins may be forgiven, that he may be kept from temptation, and that his friends who do not love God may be blessed with a change of heart. On his way to school he does not loiter, but goes briskly, even gaily,

and when there attends diligently to all his lessons, trying to remember that, by studious and obedient habits, he will not only gratify his teachers, but glorify God, who tells us that this should be our aim, "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do."

If you think he does not love to play, you will find yourself mistaken, as you see him in the hour of recreation with other little boys, whom, perhaps, he excels in leaping, running, and playing ball. In school, the best scholar; at play, the most active. School over, he returns home to be useful to his parents, and to try and make home happy for his brothers and sisters. All are glad to see him, and he has much to tell of the events of the day to his parents, who love to

have his confidence. At the close of the day, he thanks God for his care of him, and sleeps the sweet sleep which accompanies an easy conscience. On the Sabbath, if in health, he is always found at Sabbath-school, and in the house of God; and he spends the leisure of that holy day in reading his Bible, or some good book which a child may understand; or, perhaps, in instructing his younger brothers and sisters, and assisting his parents in taking care of and entertaining them.

Perhaps you think there are no such children, and that it is impossible to be so good. Is it impossible to rise early and read the Bible? To be obedient at home, and industrious at school? To be constant in your atten-

dance upon the services of the Sabbath? You may not find it easy at first, but, like a little child who commences to walk by taking a few steps at a time, you will learn at last not only to stand, but to "run in the way of God's commandments." I fear there are not many such children as we have described, but this is a true picture of what a Christian child should be.

A watch cannot go, unless the spring is in order; a sailing vessel cannot move unless the wind blows upon it; so you cannot serve God, unless you have the love of God in your heart.

You wonder, perhaps, that I talk of a Christian child, and think that you must be a man before you can

rightly understand all that a Christian should know; but Jesus Christ came to save little children, and you may remember what love he showed when they were brought to him that he might bless them. We have more hope that a young tree will take kindly to a new soil when it is transplanted, than one of more advanced growth. So with young hearts that are open to divine influence.

What is a Christian? A Christian is one who believes in Jesus Christ, with a faith that is of the heart and not of the head; and who strives to practice all that the Gospel teaches. Jesus Christ came to save sinners. Are you not a sinner, my dear little friends? God forbids lying; have you always told the truth from

your heart? God commands you to honour your parents;—have you never disobeyed them?—God says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" have you never been idle or trifling in Sabbath-school or in church? God says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Have you never been selfish, unkind, perhaps violent, with your young friends?

As to your duty to God; do you truly love him with all your heart? Have you not often passed an entire day without ever thinking of him? Alas! my child, have you not lived for weeks, indeed months, and it may be years, in forgetfulness of him and of his goodness? We begin to sin when we begin to breathe. If any

want to know whether this is true, they have only to look at little infants, who, though they cannot speak, yet so often show evil tempers. It is written, "Sin entered into the world and death by sin." To assure ourselves further, it is only necessary to see that infants die as well as grown people.

But whether for the infant acting out its evil nature, or for the grown man who violates the law of God, knowing the sin of transgressing, Christ's blood is shed, and an atonement made! Nothing else can save us and oh, my dear children, I entreat you to "flee from the wrath to come," for it is a "terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God." To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not

your hearts. Oh, say with your whole heart, "My Saviour, I know thou hast come to die for me, wash me in thy precious blood, and grant me grace to live to thy glory, and die in thy faith."

Be very sure your prayer will be heard, and you will have the help of the blessed Spirit of God to keep you in the way of life, to give you strength to conquer sin, and to comfort you in all your troubles. Thank God that you are born in a Christian land, where you may hear about the Saviour, and not in a heathen country, where little children are brought up in wickedness, sold as slaves, and sometimes cruelly treated by their own parents.

When you think of this, you must

surely feel how much greater the reason you should serve God; and make known by your example, that your work, from this time forth, will be pure and right. You ought to be ready for a long or a short life, and if you should die before entering upon any work for God, you will give evidence, by your preparation, that, had you lived, you would have been found among those who are known by their ways to be the children of God.

It is the glory of the gospel of Christ that it provides for all possible circumstances, for a long life, or for a short one; for health, or for sickness; for wealth, or for poverty; for joy, or for sorrow; for the strong, or for the weak; and for children, as well as for grown persons.

I have reserved for the little girls a story of a dear child who finished the work God had given her, before reaching the age of many, who, perhaps, think they are too young to help in the great work of sending God's word to the heathen. A minister had assembled the children of his parish to hold with them a missionary meeting, and to tell them about the multitudes who worship images of wood and stone; and how the unnatural parents, in countries where there is no knowledge of the true God, even kill their own little children, rather than have the trouble of bringing them up. During the recital, he observed one delicate-looking little girl whose bright eyes were fixed on him, and who seemed to fol-

low him without losing a single word.

Having finished speaking, the pastor displayed some little boxes, the covers of which were ornamented with pretty pictures, representing various missionary scenes; and one of these he offered to give to any among them who, during the year, should put aside something weekly to aid in sending the gospel to the heathen. Upon this, he saw the little girl put her arm about her father, a poor blacksmith who sat near her, and pointing to the boxes, entreated him to obtain one for her. "My friend," said the clergyman, "do you want one for your little girl?" The father took one, saying: "I do not know whether the poor child will ever be able to put anything in it."

A year passed, and the time came round for the opening of the boxes at the annual missionary meeting. The poor blacksmith was there, but he came alone. During the year he had lost his wife, and but a few days before, buried his darling child. He presented the box to the clergyman, and weeping, said to him: "Here is the box you gave her. My dear little girl begged me to give her a cent weekly from my wages when I was pleased with her behaviour, and she never missed a week. There were fifty-two weeks, and there ought to be fifty-two cents." The minister, having counted, discovered fifty-*five*, three more than the expected sum. The father, much distressed, counted over again, and said, finally,

"I cannot understand it. My child would never have taken what did not belong to her, even for a good cause; and yet there are three cents more than I gave her. Where they came from I do not know."

He was so troubled, that he spoke of it the next day to a pious lady who had been very fond of his child, and who came to see him in his affliction.

"I think I can explain it," said she. "I was with your child the evening before her death, and seeing how she suffered from fever, I asked her if the juice of an orange would not be pleasant, to which she replied, that she thought it might. I had just returned from the village, and having but three cents, which I had received in change after making some pur-

chases, I gave them to your little girl, telling her to send for an orange. I remember very well, too, regretting that I had nothing to put into the missionary-box which lay beside her on the bed."

"God be praised," said the father, "I understand it now. The orange, I am sure, was never bought; my child denied herself the refreshment, that she might have three cents more for her box."

My dear children, does not the example of this little Christian child instruct us all? and young as she was, did she not give evidence, that she accomplished her work before God called her out of the world, making manifest to her father, to her pastor, to her school and the church, that her

work was "pure and right?" Dear children, it costs something to be a Christian. You will be called upon to make many sacrifices; for Jesus Christ says, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

But the safety of your soul to all eternity; and the happiness, even in this life, of serving so good a master, will make up for all. And then, if there are great sacrifices, there are also great benefits and blessings, attendant upon the service of God. These are not what we should desire supremely in seeking Christ, but what he gives us without our asking, and more fully than if we made our own happiness the main object of our lives.

I said to you, that I could tell you nothing about your future, but of one thing I am sure. I know what our Lord promises, when he says, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." If God spares your life, and you are now studious, industrious, persevering, temperate in all things; and above all, pious, you will be intelligent, skilful, and prosperous, when you are grown up, for it is written, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." On the contrary, if you are idle, negligent, and neglectful of your duty, you will never succeed in anything you undertake. I know that if you are charitable, and earnest in your endeavours, to do good as you have opportunity, you

will secure the favour of God and man, for it is written, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments." "His seed shall be mighty upon earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed." I know, too, that if you seek your own good first, if you profane the Sabbath, act unjustly toward your neighbour, and forget God; you will lose his favour, and you may become needy and suffer from the contempt of your fellow men; for it is also written: "Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

Yes, dear children, your fate is to some extent in your own hands; even for your temporal future; and from

what you are to-day, we may judge whether you are to grow up to be an honour, or a disgrace, to those who are interested in you. All that is needful for us to know we can foretell, if your work now is pure and if it be right. Oh, profit by the great privileges you enjoy in your youth. Just entering upon life, you have a choice of good and evil before you; and if you could but look into the hearts of the many who have hitherto disregarded God, you would not wonder to hear them say: Oh, if I were only in the place of that little child, I would gladly listen to the counsels, that, if heeded, would have made me so much happier!

Oh, how many sins, and sorrows, perhaps crimes, you will be saved

from, if you listen to the voice of God, saying, "My son, give me thine heart!" Begin this very day to serve God, and you will look back upon it with joy, as the birthday of a new life, the time when you resolved to walk in the way of God's commandments, without turning to the right hand or the left.

Enter the fold of the loving Saviour, who is so ready to take you in his arms. If from this time you listen to his voice, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, "You shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

And now a word to you who have lived long enough to regret the past; and who contemplate these dear children with an interest, and tender regard, mingled perhaps with self-reproach. The past is past, but the

Saviour is present; reparation and consolation are present. It is not too late for you to enter upon a new life, or to begin to serve God, and to serve him perhaps the more faithfully, that the day with you is far spent. The glory of the gospel, is, that it not only grasps the present, but secures the future, and repairs the past. It brings the dead to life, and calls those things which were not as though they were; presenting to us Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Come then as you are, with what remains to you of strength and of life. Believe only, and you will find, amidst your doubts, errors, and sins, that God has reserved a place for you in his vineyard, and that you have the ability, if hitherto concealed,

to work for him; that you too may receive at last the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Fathers and mothers according to the flesh: to you I appeal to enforce the lessons designed for your children. With you it remains to strengthen the impressions they may have received at this time, and to watch over the seed sown in their young hearts, that it may spring up and bring forth fruit unto life eternal. I have entreated them to sanctify the Sabbath, and take part in the service of God; but how will they heed me if you do not take part with them? Will they read and meditate the Scriptures, if you do not read and pray with them?

They ought to be faithful in the performance of the duty of each day, with a view to fulfil the mission to which God has appointed them. But how will they do this, unless you set them the example? They should be subject to authority. Do you so govern them as to ensure a respect for it in your position as parents. Oh, how great is your responsibility, and how guilty must you appear in the sight of God, if you disregard the Saviour's invitation to bring the little ones to him! But, if faithful, what joy will be yours, when, at the last day, you shall meet your children at the feet of the once crucified Saviour, who will stand ready to welcome the souls he has redeemed, and the hearts he has renewed!

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